IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-4 and add new claims 5-8 as follows:

5. A high-strength austenitic stainless steel strip exhibiting excellent flatness with a Vickers hardness of 400 or more, having a composition comprising C up to 0.20 mass %, Si up to 4.0 mass %, Mn up to 5.0 mass %, 4.0-12.0 mass % Ni, 12.0-20.0 mass % Cr, Mo up to 5.0 mass %, N up to 0.15 mass % and the balance being Fe and inevitable impurities and having a value Md(N) in a range of 0-125 defined by a formula: Md(N)=580-520C-2Si-16Mn-16Cr-23Ni-26Cu-300N-10Mo, and having a dual-phase structure of austenite and martensite which involves a reversion austenitic phase at a ratio more than 3 vol.%.

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6. The austenitic stainless steel strip defined in claim 5, which further contains at least one or more of Cu up to 3.0 mass %, Ti up to 0.5 mass %, Nb up to 0.50 mass %, Al up to 0.2 mass %, B up to 0.015 mass %, REM (rare earth metals) up to 0.2 mass %, Y up to 0.2 mass %, Ca up to 0.1 mass % and Mg up to 0.10 mass %.

7. A method of manufacturing a high-strength austenitic stainless steel strip excellent in flatness of shape with Vickers hardness of 400 or more, which comprises the steps of:

providing an austenitic stainless steel strip having a composition comprising C up to 0.20 mass %, Si up to 4.0 mass %, Mn up to 5.0 mass %, 4.0-12.0 mass % Ni, 12.0-20.0 mass % Cr, Mo up to 5.0 mass %, N up to 0.15 mass %, optionally at least one or more of Cu up to 3.0 mass %, Ti up to 0.5 mass %, Nb up to 0.50 mass %, Al up to 0.2 mass %, B up to 0.015 mass %, REM (rare earth metals) up to 0.2 mass %, Y up to 0.2 mass %, Ca up to 0.1 mass % and Mg up to 0.10 mass %, and the balance being Fe except inevitable impurities under the condition that a value Md(N) is 0-125 defined by a formula: Md(N)=580-520C-2Si-16Mn-16Cr-23Ni-26Cu-300N-10Mo;